

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

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Press Release

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WOODSTOCK, CT, OCTOBER 13, 2021:

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN: The Town of Woodstock held a Special Town meeting last night, immediately followed by an Open Public Forum to discuss American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Two ordinances were on the agenda to be amended, and another to be rescinded. All proposed changes passed. The Ordinance Creating the Woodstock Agricultural Land Preservation and Land Acquisition Fund was amended to allow alternates to be appointed from participating boards and commissions. The Ordinance Concerning the Appointment of the Assessor was rescinded, as it is out of date and the statute that required it is no longer valid. Last, but not least, the Ordinance Regarding Tax Abatements for Dairy Farms and Fruit Orchards was amended to include different types of farms that are allowable under Connecticut General Statutes. For example, vegetable and nursery farms now qualify.

Stewart Morse, Chair of the Agricultural Commission, was happy with the support to amend the ordinance regarding Tax Abatements for Dairy Farms and Fruit Orchards. "This move recognizes the changing face of agriculture in our community".

First Selectman Swan was pleased with the turnout. "We had approximately 50 citizens attend the meetings in person, and nearly 20 via Zoom. People had the opportunity to ask questions, both in the Special Town Meeting and in the Public Forum."

Much of the night was devoted to discussion of the ARPA funds. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick gave an overview that touched on where the funding comes from, eligible and non-eligible uses, and reporting. First Selectman Swan then introduced a preliminary list of funding ideas. The Board of Selectmen are working together to carefully plan the use of these funds to best benefit the town.

"It's important to note that several of the items on this list came from Woodstock citizens reaching out to us directly through the arpa2021@woodstockct.gov email that was created for this purpose," states Swan. "Upgrades to town recreation fields, town beach improvements, town infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and compatible self-contained breathing apparatus for one of our fire departments all came to us as suggestions."

New suggestions were also made at the meeting, such as support for the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp dam repair and improvements to the town-owned tennis courts.

State Representative Pat Boyd was also in attendance at both meetings. “Woodstock is working to ensure that ARPA funds are being spent wisely and to the benefit of the majority of residents, specifically causes impacted by the pandemic. It was great to see the community engagement, as people asked questions and discussed ideas that they’d like to see included as proposals for these funds.” Boyd said.